

VZCZCXRO4647
PP RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHPB
DE RUEHKO #1112 0610656
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 020656Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9243
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 4904
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 4952
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 7540
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 8007
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 6094
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 8200
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

UNCLAS TOKYO 001112

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OES/IHA POWELL, SINGER AND FENDRICK
DEPT FOR EAP/J
USDA PASS TO APHIS
HHS PASS TO CDC
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER, BHAT AND ELVANDER

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [KSTH](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [WHO](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: JAPAN WEEKLY REPORT MARCH 2

REF: A. 05 STATE 153802
[1](#)B. TOKYO 958 AND PREVIOUS

[1](#)1. No human or animal outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza (AI) were reported in Japan during the past week.

-- Doesn't Pay to Cheat on the AI Test: Police Arrest
Ibaraki Chicken Swappers --

[1](#)2. On February 27, prefectural police arrested four veterinarians and employees of the IKN Egg Farm Company on charges that they violated the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law, which requires the reporting of any suspected outbreaks of contagious diseases in poultry to health authorities. The four IKN employees allegedly failed to report a case of suspected avian influenza infection to the Ibaraki Prefecture government last August. (This case was first reported in 05 Tokyo 6538). The veterinarians are also suspected of obstructing an avian influenza test conducted by the Prefecture at three of their farms by substituting samples taken from birds at other poultry farms.

-- No More Chicken Guts from France...for now --

[1](#)3. On February 24, in response to the recent outbreak of avian influenza in France, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced that it was instituting a ban on the importation of French poultry meat and guts including foie gras (fatty liver). Canned and pouch-packed products are not targeted by the ban if authorities can confirm that they were appropriately heat-processed. On February 27, MAFF Vice Minister Aoi Ishihara said that his ministry would discuss the conditions for the heat processing of other poultry products with the government of France if Paris were to request such a discussion. Japan imported 1,510 tons of poultry meat and 377 tons of poultry guts from France in 2005.

-- Tamiflu from Petroleum: Tokyo U. Team Successful in
Developing New Formula --

[1](#)4. A research team at Tokyo University led by Professor Masakatsu Shibasaki has successfully developed a formula to produce oseltamivir phosphate (commonly known as Tamiflu)

by using a petrochemical compound instead of the plant-based ingredient currently used for the production of the antiviral drug. The researchers hope the new method will help ensure a stable supply of Tamiflu, especially in light of surging demand worldwide. The antiviral is currently synthesized from shikimic acid, which is extracted from the seeds of the star anise plant. The team successfully produced Tamiflu by using 1,4 cyclohexadiene, which is a compound that can be produced from benzene at a low cost. The team believes that Shibasaki's novel formula will give researchers a larger toolkit they can use to further develop new antiviral drugs in case a Tamiflu-resistant strain emerges in the future. Tokyo University applied for a patent on the formula on February 23, but because Roche holds the license to manufacture Tamiflu, Shibasaki's group will hold talks with the Swiss drug manufacturer.

SCHIEFFER